

The President's Daily Brief

30 January 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Moscow's arms offer has placed King Husayn in a dilemma. (Page 1)

Husak handled himself well during the Czechoslovak plenum but his personal power may yet be challenged on several fronts. (Page 2)

The Egyptians are in dire need of qualified combat pilots; Americans living in the Cairo area have become increasingly unpopular because of the Israeli air attacks. (Page 3)

The Italians are inching toward the formation of a new government. (Page 4)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] South Vietnam [REDACTED] (Page 5)

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USSR-JORDAN

The USSR has finally responded to King Husayn's long-standing request for arms aid. In a message to Ambassador Symmes, Husayn said the Soviet chargé in Amman offered to provide a sizable number of anti-aircraft and long-range artillery pieces, and assorted equipment in a conversation with the King on 28 January. The chargé said the total price would come to around \$20 million, with 90 percent of the materiel to be delivered by the end of 1970. The Soviets also offered to train Jordanians on the equipment in the USSR and send Russians to Jordan to help in the transfer of the materiel. Husayn, whose military advisers are discussing the purchase of similar equipment with a US mission now visiting Amman, said he had told the chargé that he would need "a few days" to decide.

After a six-month delay, the timing of the Soviet offer is suspiciously opportune from Moscow's point of view. The Soviets have put Husayn on the spot at a time when he is under growing domestic pressure to take some action to counter daily Israeli air attacks. If Husayn refuses Moscow's proposal the Soviets can play the role of the disabused salesman who has made a generous offer. If he accepts, they have a foot in the door, as they have wanted for some time.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Czechoslovak party plenum took another step this week to purify the ranks of the party. In addition to approving leadership changes, the plenum created a 12-member party commission, dominated by pro-Soviet conservatives, to oversee the revalidation of each party member's credentials. Yesterday's party press assured the rank and file that this action is being taken to reunify the party and should not be misconstrued as revenge.

The widespread overhaul of the party rank and file will be crucial for the future of the party and its leaders. Although the revalidation commission is dominated by conservatives, the program will be administered for the most part by local party officials who are generally under Husak's control. Thus the replacement this week of the Slovak and Czech regional party bosses takes on added significance.

Lubomir Strougal, a conservative rival of Husak, was removed as head of the powerful Czech party apparatus in favor of the more moderate Josef Kempny who is now indebted to Husak for his promotion. In Slovakia, Husak did not fare as well, with Lenart replacing the more moderate Sadovsky. Lenart, however, has a reputation of being malleable and may prove responsive to Husak's will.

The leadership reshuffle and other topics at the plenum gave Husak another opportunity to display his considerable skills as a counterpuncher. So far, however, Husak's "victory" can only be measured in terms of his success in warding off a complete takeover by conservative elements of the party leadership. Next week's Slovak party plenum may provide further clues on the extent of Husak's real authority.

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EGYPT

The Egyptians are having trouble developing qualified combat pilots to man their estimated inventory of 200 supersonic aircraft. Combat losses and training accidents have reduced the number of well-qualified MIG-21 and SU-7 pilots to about 110.

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Pilot losses from all causes have averaged 20 per year since 1967. This attrition is likely to increase as the air war intensifies.

* * *

Egyptian irritation over the Israeli air attacks is building up to the point where anti-American incidents may occur. Wednesday afternoon, for example, American children returning home from school were mildly harassed by Egyptian children blaming the US for supplying planes to Israel. The school is only about a block away from the Egyptian army camp, just outside Cairo, which the Israelis bombed that morning. Egyptian household servants, sensing this growing mood, are advising their American employers to stay out of the bazaar area. The US Interests section in Cairo also has sensed a gradual rise in anti-American sentiment in the Cairo area.

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ITALY

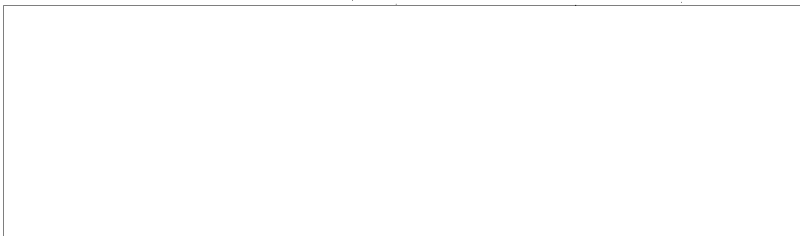
The last negotiating session between the secretaries of the four center-left parties ended on 28 January, and if their recommendations are approved by the party directorates the way will be clear for the formation of a new coalition government. The Christian Democrat directorate met yesterday and the other three parties will meet today to consider the general principles of the new government mediated by the party secretaries.

It is not likely the directorates will disavow their own secretaries, and Prime Minister Rumor may be able to resign as early as 31 January. Some parties may convoke their central committees to ratify the decision, however, and delay Rumor's resignation several days. This will be followed by further negotiations on government posts prior to the installation of a new coalition. Rumor is the likely candidate to succeed himself.

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LAOS - SOUTH VIETNAM



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NOTES

El Salvador - Honduras: Troops from both countries exchanged fire across the border yesterday in the most serious incident since last summer's five-day war. Each country has publicly accused the other of sending troops and aircraft across the border. Yesterday's clash will deter efforts to normalize relations, and the delicate bilateral negotiations which began last Monday in Costa Rica will now be on an even shakier footing.

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